

50

**Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Committee – Public Hearing April 23, 2015**

**S.B. 1135: An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State Budget**

April 23, 2015

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger and members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the chance to speak with you today. My name is Gwen Carter. I live in Hartford and I work as a Personal Care Attendant in home care. I am here in support of Senate Bill #1135 to help make the state budget more stable year-to-year. I also want to urge you to do even more – please raise more revenue from those who can best afford it so the state can pay fair wages and provide the full services people need to live a good life.

Whenever the state budget comes up short, it is the services for people in need – the people I take care of – that are the first thing to get cut. It is not fair to put them through that stress over and over again, so I support ideas like Bill #1135 to make the state budget less volatile.

But we also need your leadership to raise the higher revenue needed to lift up thousands of caregivers and the people we serve.

I have been working in the health care field for 20 years. I come from a family of health care workers and I understand the difference that we have on peoples' lives. As homecare workers, our goal is to provide our consumers the opportunity to live a good life. I am able to help my consumers to stay in their homes and not be put in facilities if they do not want to be.

However, I feel that we should also have the opportunity to have a good life and be secure in taking care of our own families, too.

Sadly, as it stands, we are not able to do so.

We are only paid \$12.61 an hour for our work providing state-funded home care to the elderly and people with physical disabilities because, we are told, there isn't enough money in the budget to pay a little bit more. We don't have workers compensation coverage if we get hurt on the job – leaving us AND our consumers at great risk – because, we are told, there isn't enough money for us. We also see how our consumers need more hours of home care services to help them live well, but they are told, there isn't enough money for them.

When will it be *our* time? When will there be enough for caregivers like me to finally make some progress, to some stability in our lives?

You have choices to make, and I thank you for your hard work for our state.

Thank you for your attention.

Gwen Carter  
90 Plainfield  
Hartford, CT 06012